



# NC SNAP

**North Carolina**  
**Support Needs Assessment Profile**

**North Carolina**  
**Procedural Guide**

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**The *NC-SNAP* Assessment Instrument  
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## **Preface**

The *NC-SNAP* is a needs assessment tool that, when administered properly, measures an individual's need for developmental disabilities (DD) supports and services. Development of the *NC-SNAP* began in 1997, and after extensive field testing and revision, the *NC-SNAP* was officially adopted by the state of North Carolina in 1999 as the preferred tool for determining an individual's intensity of need for DD services.

The successful implementation of the *NC-SNAP* statewide depends not only on well trained examiners, but also on the clear definition of systemic processes that support the *NC-SNAP*. This *NC-SNAP North Carolina Procedural Guide* was written to provide North Carolina area programs and local management entities (LMEs) with important procedural information. This guide defines administration requirements, including identifying those individuals who are required to have an *NC-SNAP* assessment and the individuals responsible for administration of the instrument. This guide also defines the responsibilities of all support functions, including the responsibilities of the *NC-SNAP* authors, the *NC-SNAP* Central Support Office (SNAP Central), *NC-SNAP* instructors, area program/LME staff, *NC-SNAP* examiners, and the Raleigh MH/DD/SAS Section; and establishes procedures for examiner training, examiner certification, data collection and monitoring, database software training and support, and quality assurance. Additionally, this manual provides information on the development of the *NC-SNAP*, including reliability and validity data, and a section on frequently-asked questions about the *NC-SNAP*.

# **Acknowledgments**

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## Administration

To ensure consistent administration of the *NC-SNAP* instrument statewide, requirements for administration are clearly defined herein. The individuals responsible for administration of the *NC-SNAP*, the individuals required to have an *NC-SNAP* assessment, and the frequency at which the *NC-SNAP* should be administered are defined in the following paragraphs.

### Responsibilities for Administration

An individual's case manager is the person with primary responsibility for the administration of the *NC-SNAP*. Case managers are typically familiar with the individuals served by the area program/LME's DD service system, while also serving as advocates for the individuals. In situations where a person receiving services does not have a case manager assigned, it is assumed that a knowledgeable Qualified Developmental Disabilities Professional (QDDP/QMRP) will be assigned the responsibility for administering the *NC-SNAP*; however, in the absence of an independent case manager, the area program/LME DD coordinator will be responsible for assigning the responsibility for administration of the *NC-SNAP*. All persons assigned to administer the *NC-SNAP* must attend and pass *NC-SNAP* examiner training. It is highly recommended that the following individuals receive training to become *NC-SNAP* certified examiners:

- DD Case managers/support brokers,
- DD Case manager/support broker supervisors, and
- QMRPs/QDDPs assigned responsibility for completing the *NC-SNAP* assessment.

### Individuals Required to Have an *NC-SNAP*

All persons served by the state's Developmental Disabilities (DD) system are required to have an *NC-SNAP* administered:

- Annually (prior to the individual's annual planning meeting) and
- Whenever there is a significant change in the individual's need profile.

Individuals waiting to receive DD services are required to have an *NC-SNAP* administered:

- Upon initial contact with the DD service system and
- When the individual enters the DD service system (an annual *NC-SNAP* is required after the person enters the DD service system).

**Note:** Children in early intervention programs who do not have formal diagnoses of mental retardation are not required to have *NC-SNAP* assessments administered unless they are receiving, or applied to receive, CAP funding.

Area Programs/LMEs have the primary responsibility for ensuring that all persons identified above have a current *NC-SNAP* assessment completed, keyed into the *NC-SNAP* database, and transmitted to the state in a timely manner.

## **Training and Support Responsibilities**

The success of the *NC-SNAP* depends on numerous individuals assigned responsibilities in support of the instrument. The responsibilities assigned to all support staff, including the *NC-SNAP* authors, the *NC-SNAP* Central Support Office (SNAP Central), *NC-SNAP* instructors, area programs/LMEs, *NC-SNAP* examiners, and the Raleigh MH/DD/SAS Section are included in the following paragraphs.

### **NC-SNAP Authors**

The *NC-SNAP* authors at Murdoch Center are responsible for:

- Developing the *NC-SNAP* instructor training curriculum,
- Training *NC-SNAP* lead instructors and support instructors throughout the state,
- Monitoring the efforts of SNAP Central to ensure consistent and reliable training protocols and support functions are in place and adhered to,
- Coordination and collaboration of support and research functions with the Raleigh MH/DD/SAS Section, and
- Assisting in the creation and revision of policies and procedures pertinent to the *NC-SNAP*.

### **NC-SNAP Central Support Office (SNAP Central)**

The *NC-SNAP* Central Support Office (SNAP Central) was created to assume the primary responsibility for statewide examiner training, quality assurance, and administrative and technical support of the *NC-SNAP*. SNAP Central is responsible for:

- Examiner training and certification,
- Quality assurance,
- Preparation and distribution of materials and publications,
- Data monitoring,
- Software training and support,
- Procedural clarification, and
- Technical assistance.

The primary support functions directed by SNAP Central are further defined in the section titled *Support Functions*.

### **NC-SNAP Support Instructors**

All of the state's Developmental Centers are required to identify staff to be trained as *NC-SNAP* support instructors. Support instructors are responsible for:

- Identifying *NC-SNAP* training needs in their region,
- Registering participants for *NC-SNAP* training,
- Scheduling meeting space for all *NC-SNAP* training sessions in their region,
- Co-teaching all *NC-SNAP* training sessions in their region in conjunction with a master instructor from SNAP Central,
- Providing overall support for examiner training conducted in their region, and
- Conducting look-behind re-administrations as assigned by the SNAP Central office.

## **NC-SNAP Examiners**

*NC-SNAP* examiners are responsible for administering the *NC-SNAP* in accordance with the guidelines established in the *NC-SNAP Examiner's Guide* and ensuring that profiles are forwarded to the appropriate area program/LME for keying.

**Note:** *NC-SNAP* profiles completed by provider agencies should be forwarded to the area program/LME with responsibility for the individual. This may or may not correspond with the county or area of residence.

## **Area Programs/LMEs**

All area programs/LMEs are responsible for identifying and assigning staff to support NC-SNAP activities. Area program/LME staff are responsible for:

- Registering persons responsible for completing the *NC-SNAP* assessment for *NC-SNAP* examiner's training,
- Ensuring that at least one individual at the area program/LME is assigned and competent to manage the *NC-SNAP* database program,
- Stocking and distributing *NC-SNAP* assessment forms within their catchment area,
- Ensuring that all consumers in their catchment area are administered *NC-SNAP* assessment profiles in accordance with the guidelines set out herein,
- Ensuring that all *NC-SNAP* assessments are keyed into the area program/LME's *NC-SNAP* database and transmitted to the state in a timely manner, and
- Supporting the look-behind quality assurance effort.

## **Raleigh MH/DD/SAS Section**

The state MH/DD/SAS section is responsible for:

- Database program support;
- Quality assurance;
- Oversight of compliance, protocols, and procedures;
- *NC-SNAP* related research and data analysis; and
- Coordination and collaboration of support and research functions with the *NC-SNAP* authors.



## **Support Functions**

The procedures for examiner training, examiner certification, material preparation and distribution, database software training and support, quality assurance, and data monitoring are defined in the following paragraphs.

### **Examiner Training**

To ensure that the *NC-SNAP* is administered with the highest degree of confidence, all persons administering the instrument must attend and pass an *NC-SNAP* examiner training session taught by a certified *NC-SNAP* instructor. Examiner training will be offered monthly, at a minimum, at each of the three Developmental Centers (i.e., Murdoch Center, Caswell Center, and J. Iverson Riddle Developmental Center) and can be arranged on-site at an area program/LME if sufficient demand exists (i.e., typically, twelve to fifteen people). SNAP Central is responsible for directing all *NC-SNAP* examiner training sessions utilizing a master instructor from SNAP Central and a support instructor from the Developmental Center where the training is taking place (*NC-SNAP* instructors must be trained and certified by the *NC-SNAP* authors). Master instructors from SNAP Central will ensure that a consistent and reliable examiner training curriculum is used statewide, which is considered critical to certified examiner outcomes.

There is currently no fee for *NC-SNAP* examiner training; however, it is only offered on an "as needed" basis to those persons assigned by the area program/LME to complete *NC-SNAP* assessments. As such, area programs/LMEs must screen all requests for *NC-SNAP* training and forward registration data to the appropriate training site (the *NC-SNAP* is intended to be completed by professional staff). The Development Centers will only accept registration requests from the area program/LMEs' assigned training coordinators, and all requests for training should be forwarded electronically on the *NC-SNAP Examiner Training Registration Form*.

*NC-SNAP* refresher training is offered on an as-needed basis based on demand, and it is available to all certified examiners who would like to improve their assessment skills. Examiners who have not completed an *NC-SNAP* assessment for an extended period, or examiners who are not comfortable with their assessment skills, are encouraged to contact the area program/LME or one of the Developmental Centers' *NC-SNAP* training coordinators to register for refresher training. On-site refresher training can also be scheduled at the area program/LME by contacting SNAP Central.

### **Certification**

All *NC-SNAP* examiners who have attended and passed an examiner's training session will be issued an *NC-SNAP* certification number and a certification card. Once assigned a certification number, an examiner may administer the *NC-SNAP* anywhere in the state. SNAP Central is responsible for ensuring that all aspects of the certification process are in

place and carried out in accordance with the guidelines defined below.

- Examiner certification numbers will include the year the examiner was certified, a two letter code representing the location/person responsible for training the individual, and a four digit sequential number.
- A statewide training database of all certified *NC-SNAP* examiners will be maintained. The database should include the name, telephone number, certification number, date of certification, and the sponsoring area program/LME of all certified examiners.
- After all *NC-SNAP* examiner training sessions, certification cards will be mailed directly to examiners who attended and passed the training;
- After all *NC-SNAP* examiner training sessions, certification numbers will also be forwarded electronically to the area program/LMEs' assigned data managers for entry into the area program/LMEs' *NC-SNAP* databases.

**Note:** An examiner's certification number must be entered into the area program/LME's *NC-SNAP* database before assessment profiles done by that examiner can be entered. For more information on the *NC-SNAP* software database program, refer to the *NC-SNAP Software User's Guide*.

## Material Preparation/Distribution

There are numerous materials in addition to the assessment tool itself that must be prepared, maintained, and distributed in support of the *NC-SNAP* that are vital to the success of the program. SNAP Central is responsible for the following:

Preparing, ordering, stocking, and distribution of the:

- *NC-SNAP* forms,
- *NC-SNAP* training videotape,
- *NC-SNAP Examiner's Guide*,
- *NC-SNAP Case Histories*,
- *NC-SNAP Instructor's Manual*,
- *NC-SNAP North Carolina Procedural Guide*, and the
- *NC-SNAP Software User's Guide*.

## Data Collection

*NC-SNAP* profile information will be collected for persons with developmental disabilities at all of the area programs/LMEs and Developmental Centers in North Carolina. Area programs/LMEs are responsible for assigning individuals to collect and enter all *NC-SNAP* profiles conducted on persons served by their area program/LME, including entering assessments completed by provider agencies assigned responsibility for completing the *NC-SNAP*.

Data managers assigned to manage the *NC-SNAP* databases should enter and transmit *NC-SNAP* profile data on a timely basis. At a minimum, monthly data transmissions are required; however, weekly *NC-SNAP* data transmittals are preferred.

SNAP Central will monitor the *NC-SNAP* data sent to the state database to ensure all data collection sites are entering and transmitting *NC-SNAP* profile data on a regular basis and to identify problem areas or trends. Areas that may require monitoring include overdue assessments, individuals reported using more than one unique ID number, examiner numbers in use that are not on record in the state's examiner training database, and *NC-SNAP* profile scores that are considered odd or irregular.

## **Software Training and Support**

To maintain the integrity of the *NC-SNAP* profile information collected and transmitted to the statewide database, it is important that all individuals assigned to enter *NC-SNAP* data receive appropriate training and support. SNAP Central has primary responsibility for ensuring that materials and training to support *NC-SNAP* software users are available. A copy of the *NC-SNAP Software User's Guide* will be supplied to all *NC-SNAP* software users throughout the state. The *NC-SNAP Software User's Guide* describes the functionality of the *NC-SNAP* software and provides users with important information on maintaining the *NC-SNAP* database. Additionally, SNAP Central will provide *NC-SNAP* data managers with ongoing consultation services and formal classroom training or individual instruction on the software as required.

Area programs/LMEs are responsible for contacting SNAP Central to request a copy of the *NC-SNAP Software User's Guide* for newly assigned *NC-SNAP* data managers and for requesting *NC-SNAP* database software training for their staff if required.

The Raleigh MH/DD/SAS Section IT department is responsible for providing software technical support to area programs/LMEs having difficulty with the operation of the software or transmission features.

## **Look-Behind Quality Assurance**

The re-administration or "look-behind" of *NC-SNAP* assessments is part of the on-going quality assurance process in place to monitor the integrity of the *NC-SNAP* profile data transmitted to the state. The look-behind effort requires certified *NC-SNAP* instructors and certified examiners to re-administer *NC-SNAP* assessments for individuals recently assessed by other examiners. Look-behind re-administrations will be assigned monthly by SNAP Central for *NC-SNAP* assessments completed in the previous month. *NC-SNAP* assessments originally completed by case managers and provider agencies will be assigned to *NC-SNAP* instructors, while assessments completed by Developmental Center staff will be assigned to the responsible area program/LME. The procedures used to conduct the *NC-SNAP* look-behind effort are delineated in the following paragraphs.

## Look-behind Selection and Assignment

SNAP Central will randomly select 5% of all *NC-SNAP* assessments completed during the previous thirty-day period for a look-behind re-administration. Although *NC-SNAP* assessments will be randomly selected, an effort will be made to include assessments reported from all of the area programs/LMEs. A list of individuals requiring look-behind *NC-SNAP* assessments will be prepared monthly by SNAP Central and forwarded to *NC-SNAP* instructors and the responsible area programs/LMEs. For each consumer, the unique ID, assessment date, case number, contact name and, if available, the phone number of the person conducting the original *NC-SNAP* assessment will be provided.

**Note:** Not all area programs/LMEs will receive look-behind assignments each month; those area programs/LMEs receiving look-behind assignments may be assigned as few as one look-behind re-administration.

## Look-behind Responsibilities

**NC-SNAP instructors** are responsible for completing look-behind re-administrations for assessments previously reported by an area program/LME. Look-behind re-administrations will require *NC-SNAP* instructors to contact and interview the examiner who conducted the original *NC-SNAP* assessment.

**Area programs/LMEs** are responsible for assigning look-behind assessments to a certified examiner and ensuring that look-behind re-administrations are completed and returned to SNAP Central within thirty days.

**Area program/LME NC-SNAP** examiners assigned to complete a look-behind assessment are responsible for completing the assessment within 30 days. This will require an area program/LME *NC-SNAP* examiner to contact the Developmental Center examiner who conducted the original *NC-SNAP* assessment to determine the best person to contact to complete the look-behind *NC-SNAP* re-administration. Developmental Center look-behind re-administrations should be conducted with input from someone other than, or in addition to, the original examiner.

When interviewing someone other than the original examiner, it is imperative to conduct the look-behind assessment with input from someone who is well acquainted with the individual being assessed. Preferred contacts for gathering information to complete an *NC-SNAP* re-administration are, in order of preference:

- the individual;
- a parent or guardian;
- a non-employee of the Developmental Center, or
- an employee of the Developmental Center, other than the original examiner.

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There may be occasions when it is necessary to interview more than one person about an individual's needs. This may be particularly important in cases where the individual receiving services is the primary contact for information.

**Developmental Center examiners** contacted by an examiner conducting a look-behind re-administration are asked to identify a contact person who knows the individual well, and to notify the contact person about the forthcoming phone call from the look-behind examiner.

*NC-SNAP* look-behind re-administrations should be completed within thirty days and forward to the address listed below. A *Summary Report and Supplemental Information* sheet is not required for look-behind re-administrations, and look-behind *NC-SNAP* profiles do not have to be keyed into the area program/LME's *NC-SNAP* database.

SNAP Central  
Murdoch Center Administration Bldg.  
Post Office Box 3000  
1600 East C Street  
Butner, NC 27509

Occasionally, a situation may arise where a contact person is unable to be reached after multiple attempts, and efforts to contact him or her will have to be discontinued. While no one can say exactly when efforts to contact someone should stop, a diligent effort is expected. If a look-behind re-administration is unable to be completed after a thorough effort, return the *NC-SNAP* form to SNAP Central with a note indicating the name of the contact person and the reason the look-behind re-administration could not be completed.

**Note:** The look-behind process may be revised periodically for research or quality refinement purposes.

## Development of the *NC-SNAP*

The *NC-SNAP* assessment tool was developed over a 2½-year period and underwent field-tests on two separate occasions. The initial field test on the *NC-SNAP* was conducted in 1997 and compared the *NC-SNAP* with the Inventory for Client and Agency Planning (ICAP)<sup>1</sup> and the Developmental Disabilities Profile (DDP)<sup>2</sup>. The goal of this research was to determine which of the three instruments most accurately assessed level of intensity of support needs for persons served by the North Carolina developmental disabilities service system. The results of the 1997 field-test indicated that the *NC-SNAP* and the ICAP (with scores combined to yield five levels) had very similar predictive validity; however, neither of these two instruments in their current form were deemed satisfactory in predicting the needs of persons with developmental disabilities for the purposes defined by the North Carolina Policies Workgroup. In 1998, the *NC-SNAP* was revised in an effort to maximize its effectiveness to predict the needs of persons with developmental disabilities. In 1999, a second field-test was conducted on the *NC-SNAP* to ensure that its reliability and validity were sufficient for the instrument to be confidently used as a statewide assessment tool.

A brief overview of the design and pertinent data gathered from both the 1997 and the 1999 field tests is presented in the following paragraphs. A more extensive report is in preparation for publication. Additionally, extensive data are being collected on the *NC-SNAP* through the ongoing look-behind quality assurance effort.

### 1997 Field Test Design

The *NC-SNAP* researchers hypothesized that in order to test an assessment instrument's ability to predict the level of intensity of support needs, the assessment tool should predict the current support levels of those individuals who receive good or ideal supports. Therefore, persons who were currently receiving good or ideal supports were selected for participation in a field-test of the instruments. The level of support intensity participants were receiving were identified and categorized. The initial field-test required the researchers to:

- a) Find individuals with developmental disabilities who were well served;
- b) Determine the participating individuals' current support array levels; and
- c) Administer the three assessment instruments.

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<sup>1</sup> Bruininks, R. H., Hill, B., Weatherman, R. E., & Woodcock, R. (1986). Inventory For Client and Agency Planning. Chicago, IL: Riverside Publishing Co.

<sup>2</sup> Developmental Disabilities Profile, Albany, New York State Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities.

## Finding individuals who were well served

In order to determine if a person was well served by current DD supports, a five-level survey was administered to the individual or his or her guardian, his or her case manager, and his or her service provider. Individuals were only identified for participation in the study when all three sources agreed that the individual was receiving either good (better than adequate) or ideal services. Initially, 2,332 people receiving services from five area programs in North Carolina were identified for participation in the study. After the survey was conducted, 553 people (24 percent) were selected as participants for the 1997 study.

## Determining Current Support Array Levels

To determine the participants' current support levels, case managers were asked to identify the support array received by each person for whom they had responsibility. A participant's support array identified both residential and other types of supports the participant was receiving. Using the support array identified by the individual's case manager, each participant was independently assigned to one of five support array levels by three separate raters. Raters achieved an agreement level of 98% with regard to the assigned support array levels.

## Administering the Assessment Instruments

Case managers and Qualified Mental Retardation Professionals (QMRPs) in each of the five participating area programs and at three developmental centers were trained to administer all three of the need assessment instruments. Case managers and QMRPs were then asked to complete in random order the three need assessment tools on participants on their caseload. As an additional control procedure, an author or a research assistant interviewed a second person familiar with the participant to complete an inter-rater reliability assessment for 10% of the participant population.

## 1997 Field Test Results

The researchers were interested in the three assessment instruments' abilities to accurately predict an individual's need level as assigned by the identified support array (predictive validity) and on the ability of different raters to administer the assessment tools and get the same results (inter-rater agreement). The results of the 1997 field test are given for the *NC-SNAP* only.

**Predictive Validity:** How well does the *NC-SNAP* predict the need level determined by the support arrays of persons receiving "good" or "ideal" supports?

- Percent exact match (between assessment results and identified support array level): 30.4%
- Percent match within one level: 68.7%

**Inter-rater Agreement:** How well did different raters achieve the same need level when administering the *NC-SNAP*?

- Percent exact match inter-rater agreement: 70.7%
- Percent inter-rater agreement within one level: 98.3%

**Other Facts of Interest**

- The mean duration time to administer the *NC-SNAP* was fifteen minutes with a range of two to forty-five minutes.
- The *NC-SNAP* had a higher predictive value when used to assess individuals with high needs.
- The *NC-SNAP* tended to overestimate need.

## 1999 Field Test Design

After the 1997 field test, the *NC-SNAP* was judged to be approximately equal across all variables in effectiveness to the next best alternative instrument. The authors of the *NC-SNAP* were asked by North Carolina's Developmental Disability Policy Advisory Work Group to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the instrument using the field test data and to make revisions to the instrument with the goal of maximizing the predictive validity and inter-rater agreement of the *NC-SNAP*. In brief, the *NC-SNAP* was modified by identifying items associated with errors in predictive validity, and then eliminating or modifying those items to enhance accuracy.

After careful analysis and modification, the re-tooled *NC-SNAP* was field tested in 1999 using a stratified sample of ninety-seven participants served by one area program. The design of this second field test was almost identical to the 1997 field test except an additional analysis was conducted to identify errors in support array level determination. Results were analyzed based on both the original assigned support array and on a "corrected" support array. That is, the support array was corrected if additional information was obtained indicating that the original support array had been determined using incomplete or erroneous information, or if a change in the individual's status had occurred since the support array was originally determined.

## 1999 Field Test Results

The researchers were interested in the *NC-SNAP*'s ability to accurately predict an individual's need level as indicated by the identified support array level (predictive validity). Results were evaluated for the *NC-SNAP*'s overall scores, at each need level, and when the *NC-SNAP* was used specifically to assess children from birth to sixteen years. Additionally, the researchers added an element to the 1999 study to measure improvements in predictive validity that could be displayed by correcting inaccuracies in identified support arrays.



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Predictive Validity of the *NC-SNAP* for overall scores and for each need level, for both corrected and uncorrected support arrays, is shown in the table below.

Percent Match by Need Level		
Level	Original (Uncorrected) Support Array	Corrected for Known Support Array Errors
1	46.2%	76.9%
2	33.3%	91.7%
3	76.2%	90.5%
4	85.7%	95.2%
5	92.3%	100%
Overall	70%	92.5%

The predictive validity of the *NC-SNAP* when used to assess children from birth to sixteen years, for corrected and uncorrected support arrays, is given in the table below.

Percent Match for Children		
Age Range	Original (Uncorrected) Support Array	Corrected for known Support Array Errors
0-16 years	76.5%	100%

An additional analysis was conducted at Murdoch Center to assess the test/re-test and inter-rater reliability of the *NC-SNAP*. To assess the test/re-test reliability, certified *NC-SNAP* examiners working at Murdoch re-administered *NC-SNAPs* on 101 individuals and then re-administered another *NC-SNAP* assessment several weeks later on the same individuals. The results of this analysis are shown in the following table.

<b>TEST/RETEST Coefficients of Reliability</b>	
Overall	.918
<b>By Domain</b>	
Daily Living Supports	.920
Health Care Supports	.926
Behavioral Supports	.821

To assess the inter-rater reliability of the *NC-SNAP*, the same 101 individuals were re-administered an *NC-SNAP* by another certified examiner who was unaware of the previous *NC-SNAP* results. The results of this analysis are shown in the following table.

<b>Inter-rater Coefficients of Reliability</b>	
Overall	.856
<b>By Domain</b>	
Daily Living Supports	.882
Health Care Supports	.876
Behavioral Supports	.783

## **Development Summary**

At the conclusion of the 1999 field test, the reliability and validity data on the revised *NC-SNAP* indicated that the *NC-SNAP* predicted the level of need on the participant population at rates considered very good for instruments assessing acuity of need. Based on these data, the North Carolina Policies Work Group determined that, when administered properly, the *NC-SNAP* is a reliable, valid, and easy-to administer measurement of individual need.

The *NC-SNAP* was officially adopted by the state of North Carolina in 1999 as the preferred tool for determining an individual's intensity of need for Development Disabilities services and supports.

## Frequently-asked Questions

This chapter presents answers to frequently-asked questions about the *NC-SNAP*. Three categories of questions are addressed, including general information about the *NC-SNAP*, specifics on administering the *NC-SNAP*, and questions about the *NC-SNAP* software and database.

### NC-SNAP: General Questions

This section provides answers to questions regarding the development of the *NC-SNAP* and questions pertaining to the policies and procedures applicable to the *NC-SNAP*.

- **How was the *NC-SNAP* developed?** The *NC-SNAP* was developed through a 2½-year research project with the aim of developing an easy-to-use, reliable, and valid measure of individual need. This was accomplished through an extensive comparative field test.
- **How was the *NC-SNAP* validated?** The *NC-SNAP* was validated by determining its predictive qualities in an extensive field test, in which the *NC-SNAP* was administered to hundreds of persons in a variety of settings who were receiving good to ideal services with support arrays that ranged from low (Level 1) to high (Level 5). The *NC-SNAP* predicted the level of need for the participant population at rates that are considered good for instruments assessing acuity of need.
- **How reliable is the *NC-SNAP*?** Inter-rater agreement of the *NC-SNAP* was about 70%, which compares favorably with other standardized assessment instruments.
- **How will the *NC-SNAP* be used?** The *NC-SNAP* will be used as a measure of intensity of need for persons served or waiting to be served by the North Carolina developmental disabilities service system. Additionally, the *NC-SNAP* can be used as an initial step in the development of a person-centered support plan.
- **Will *NC-SNAP* results be used to determine what services are delivered to a client?** No. The *NC-SNAP* **does not** specify services. It identifies needs, which can be met through a variety of services. Therefore, services will be neither added nor taken away solely on the basis of an *NC-SNAP* score.
- **Should the *NC-SNAP* be re-administered each time the individual obtains a new or different service?** No. Again, the *NC-SNAP* **does not** specify services. It identifies needs, which can be met through a variety of services.
- **When should the *NC-SNAP* be re-administered?** The *NC-SNAP* should be re-administered annually in conjunction with the individual's annual person-centered plan and anytime there is a significant change in the individual's need profile (e.g., the individual suffers a debilitating stroke).

- **Will funding be tied to the NC-SNAP? If so, will funding be tied to individual budgets or will an Area Program/LME be given funding to develop aggregate budgets?** The *NC-SNAP* level of need criteria were used to replace non-reliable criteria formerly used to determine funding allocated to individuals in the service category *Supported Living* in the CAP MR/DD waiver. Information collected from this process has been helpful to the state in determining what issues must be addressed in any broader use of level of need related to cost. How the *NC-SNAP* can be used to determine cost is under consideration in North Carolina and in several other states.
- **Must a case manager be a QDDP to become an NC-SNAP examiner?** Although the *NC-SNAP* is intended to be completed by professional staff, there is no strict educational requirement to complete the *NC-SNAP*.
- **Do people living in DDA homes need an NC-SNAP?** Yes, all persons diagnosed with a developmental disability who are currently served under the North Carolina DD service system should have an *NC-SNAP* administered annually. Individuals who are waiting for DD services should have an *NC-SNAP* administered upon initial contact with the service delivery system and when the individual enters the DD service system.
- **Do children in early intervention programs who do not have formal diagnoses of a developmental disability need NC-SNAP assessments?** In the absence of formal diagnoses of a developmental disability, children should receive an *NC-SNAP* assessment **only** if there has been an application made on their behalf for CAP funding, they are receiving CAP funding, or they receive residential supports specifically designed for persons with developmental disabilities.
- **If an individual has no assigned case manager, who will be responsible for administering the NC-SNAP?** Area programs/LMEs are responsible for identifying appropriate persons to assume responsibility for completing the *NC-SNAP* assessment.
- **If an individual is not receiving DD supports or services, who should serve as the NC-SNAP examiner?** In this case, unless the individual is waiting for DD services, the *NC-SNAP* should not be administered. Individuals who are not receiving or waiting to receive DD supports or services from the North Carolina DD service system are not required to have an *NC-SNAP* assessment.
- **Will examiners be issued a certification card and certification number after successfully completing NC-SNAP training?** Yes, examiners should be given a certification number at the successful completion of their examiner training. Additionally, several weeks after the training a laminated certification card will be mailed to all examiners.
- **What if someone fails NC-SNAP training?** In order to be certified as an *NC-SNAP* examiner, an individual must attend and pass an *NC-SNAP* examiner's training class. If someone does not successfully meet this certification criteria, he or she should repeat the

training. If that person fails after a second training sessions, he or she will be ineligible to conduct *NC-SNAP* assessments.

- **Will I need to be recertified as an examiner if I move to another part of the state?** No, an *NC-SNAP* examiner certification number can be used anywhere in North Carolina; however, *NC-SNAP* refresher training is offered on a voluntary basis to all examiners who would like to improve their assessment skills. Examiners who have not completed an *NC-SNAP* assessment for an extended period, or examiners who are not comfortable with their assessment skills, are encouraged to contact one of the Developmental Center training sites to register for *NC-SNAP* refresher training.
- **I'm a certified examiner. May I show my assistant how to administer the *NC-SNAP* and let her use my number?** Absolutely not. Only certified *NC-SNAP* examiners may administer the *NC-SNAP*.
- **How can I become an *NC-SNAP* instructor?** At this time, all examiner training is overseen by the SNAP Central office at Murdoch Center, and only support staff from the Developmental Centers can be trained to become instructors. All *NC-SNAP* instructors must be certified by the *NC-SNAP* researchers.
- **Will the *NC-SNAP* replace any other forms?** It is anticipated that the LOE and MR2 will eventually be replaced. These forms should, however, continue to be used until notification is received from the state DD Section.
- **Can I make copies of the blank *NC-SNAP* form?** No. The *NC-SNAP* and all related materials (i.e., database software, instructional video, *Instructor's Manual*, and *Examiner's Guide*) are copyrighted; however, these materials are available free of charge when used in the state of North Carolina in accordance with state policy.
- **Where do we get blank *NC-SNAP* forms when our supply runs low?** Examiners should contact the appropriate area program/LME to obtain additional *NC-SNAP* forms. Area programs/LMEs are responsible for keeping a stock of forms on hand for all *NC-SNAP* examiners including those working for provider agencies. The area program/LME's designated *NC-SNAP* representative should contact the *NC-SNAP* director at Murdoch Center for additional forms.
- **Where will the *NC-SNAP* be stored?** Store completed *NC-SNAP* assessments in the individual's permanent record, in a centralized records location, or wherever official eligibility records are maintained at your area program/LME.
- **Should I use a pencil or pen (blue or black ink) when I fill out the *NC-SNAP*?** We recommend using a pen. Black ink is sometimes preferred or even required.
- **Will a registration fee be charged for examiner's training?** Currently, there is no charge for *NC-SNAP* examiner training; however, examiner training is only offered to qualified persons who have been assigned responsibility for completing the *NC-SNAP*

by the area program/LME. As such, all *NC-SNAP* examiner training registration requests must be approved by the area program/LME.

## Completing the *NC-SNAP*

This section provides answers to questions on completing the *NC-SNAP* and related forms.

- **The *NC-SNAP*'s *Summary Report & Supplemental Information* form asks if the case has been reviewed by the single portal coordinator. How do I know if this has occurred?** Due to the elimination of the single portal system in North Carolina this question is no longer valid, and it can be ignored.
- **How do you define *Significant natural supports*?** *Significant natural supports* refers to natural (i.e., non-paid) supports that if no longer available would have to be immediately replaced to assure the life and safety of the individual on an extended, ongoing basis. For example, if an individual lives at home with his or her parent, and the parent were to become incapacitated, would immediate new supports be a necessity? If yes, circle *Yes* on the coversheet.
- **Sometimes a person lives in one county but is from another county. Which county should be listed on the *NC-SNAP* form?** Enter the name of the county that is legally or fiscally responsible for the individual (i.e., the county listed on the individual's Medicaid card).
- **Similarly, some people are from an area program/LME, but live in one of the state's Developmental Centers. What should be entered under *LME* on the *NC-SNAP* form?** For individuals residing at one of the state's Developmental Centers, always enter the name of the Developmental Center as the LME.
- **How should an examiner score an item when there is conflicting information?** Ultimately, the examiner should score an item based on his or her own judgment after reviewing all available information. If two sources disagree, the examiner should seek additional information from other persons, evaluations, or direct observations to make an accurate assessment of need.
- **Does *Equipment Supports* refer to the purchase of equipment?** No. Score this item based on the amount of support that is required to **maintain or service** an individual's equipment. The amount of equipment required, how frequently the equipment is used, and the purchase price of the equipment should not be considered when rating this item. If the individual's equipment does not require repair or maintenance at least once a month, score Level 1.
- **How is the *NC-SNAP* to be used as part of a personal plan for support?** Page four of the *NC-SNAP* provides a worksheet for developing a personal support plan.

- **Why doesn't the *NC-SNAP* include a category specifically for vocation or communication supports?** The *NC-SNAP* is designed to functionally assess an individual's level of intensity of need. Some areas such as vocation and communication, while extremely important aspects of an individual's life, do not easily fit into need levels. During field testing of the *NC-SNAP* the authors found that including a category for vocational support needs actually hurt the predictive validity of the instrument. The authors speculate that this is because of the wide range of supports needed at all levels.
- **How do I score psychiatric supports on the *NC-SNAP*?** Services requiring a licensed physician (MD), such as medication monitoring, should be scored under *Physician Services*. Services that may be supplied by a psychiatrist, such as counseling or therapy, that could easily be supplied by a psychologist or other mental health provider should be scored under *Mental Health Services*.
- **If an individual receives 24-hour awake supervision because the residential program's policy requires it, should the individual be scored as requiring 24-hour awake supervision if his or her true need is only 24-hours without awake staff overnight?** No, if you can accurately assess that the individual would be adequately supported without awake staff overnight, score the individual's true need.
- **If an individual's only participation in self care is to lift his arms to assist someone put on his shirt and walk to the bathroom with assistance, would this individual's *Assistance Needed* score be "Partial to Complete Assistance," or "Extreme Need"?** Because the individual can participate, although very limited, in self care, the individual would not be scored as having an "Extreme Need" (Level 5). "Extreme Need" in the *Assistance Needed* category is reserved for those individuals who are completely and totally dependent on others for all of their care. The appropriate *Assistance Needed* score for this individual would be "Partial to Complete Assistance" (Level 4).
- **Level 5 under *Supervision* in the Daily Living Supports section of the *NC-SNAP* refers to "continuous monitoring." What constitutes continuous monitoring?** Continuous monitoring refers to nonstop (i.e., twenty four hours a day, seven days a week) monitoring either by first person visual or auditory observation, or electronic monitoring (e.g., a medical alarm that is constantly on and equipped to sound an alarm as required). If the staff required to provide an individual's monitoring can briefly leave the person unattended to get a cup of coffee, continuous monitoring probably does not apply and Level 5 should not be scored. If the staff member required to provide an individual's continuous monitoring must always be replaced by another staff member before leaving the room, continuous monitoring does apply and Level 5 should be scored.

## The *NC-SNAP* Software Database Program

This section provides answers to questions regarding the *NC-SNAP* software program used by the area programs/LMEs and Developmental Centers to collect *NC-SNAP* profile data and send it to the state.

- **What computer applications are needed to use the *NC-SNAP* database program?**  
The program is written in Microsoft Access. There is currently a version 1.2.3a available that is compatible with Access 97 and a version 2.1, which functions with Access 2000 or greater. Both upgrades are distributed on the state's software distribution website at [ncdmh.net/softwaredistribution/](http://ncdmh.net/softwaredistribution/). The latest upgrades do not include the *NC-SNAP* data files, which must already be installed on your local computer.
- **Can the *NC-SNAP* database program be shared by multiple users?** Yes, the *NC-SNAP* software program and data files can be copied to a network location and shared by multiple users.
- **Can I backup my LME's *NC-SNAP* data file for safekeeping?** Yes, simply copy the NCSNAP\_DATA.mdb file to another location/disk.



## **Contact Information**

Questions regarding *NC-SNAP* policies and procedures should be directed to Rod Realon in the Raleigh MH/DD/SAS Section: (919) 733-3654 or [Rodney.Realon@ncmail.net](mailto:Rodney.Realon@ncmail.net).

Questions regarding *NC-SNAP* administration, examiner training, and the look-behind quality assurance effort can be directed to Regina Blalock at SNAP Central: (919) 575-1000 or [Regina.Blalock@ncmail.net](mailto:Regina.Blalock@ncmail.net).